

May 29 / Administration of George Bush, 1992

it.” That was a powerful message, and I think people are craving all around this world for that kind of spiritual, inner strength.

The Federal Government cannot teach values, but it can create an environment where they take root and grow. In every neighborhood in America, there are well-springs of traditional values. And when I was last here in your great city, I had the privilege of meeting with the kids at the Challengers Boys and Girls Club. For those who haven’t seen it, I expect there are other examples, Tom, around your city like it, but those who haven’t seen this one, you really ought to check it out. The club was founded by a remarkable man, a man who flew back with us yesterday from Washington, being back there to share his experience with people in DC, his name, Lou Dantzler.

Now, Lou works day and night, day and night, to give these kids the values and habits that they have to succeed. And in the gym where I spoke there were huge hand-printed signs covering the walls. And the signs said: “Preparation is the key to success.” “Always have a positive attitude.” “Education plus hard work plus discipline equals achievement.” And in this sophisticated age, I suppose some people might find these old home truths a little on the corny side. But I don’t, and I’m sure that Lou Dantzler’s kids don’t either. They’ve

learned something that Americans across the generations have learned: Traditional values bring hope in place of despair; they hold the power to transform a neighborhood, a city, and indeed, a human life.

And this is a time of great change for our country. Change sometimes seems to threaten the most valuable legacies that we hope to leave our children: good jobs, strong families, a Nation at peace. Changes breed uncertainty and, yes, skepticism. And I understand that. But I also understand this: The skeptics won’t do the work that needs to be done. People like Lou Dantzler will. He and every American like him are what make America a rising Nation, a country buoyed by the hopes and determination of people who refuse to settle for the status quo. Their faith is the best antidote to pessimism, the surest proof that the best days of America, the greatest and freest Nation on the face of the Earth, still lie before us.

Thank you all very, very much. It’s a pleasure to be with you.

*Note: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the Biltmore Bowl at the Biltmore Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Lodwrick M. Cook, chairman and chief executive officer, ARCO; and Adrienne Medawar, president, Town Hall of California.*

## Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With the Sheriff’s Youth Athletic League in Los Angeles

May 29, 1992

*The President.* Hey, you Dodgers, good to see you all. Sheriff Block, may I salute. Did you all meet the Governor of this State? Some of you have probably seen him. Where is Governor Wilson? There he is, right there.

Let me tell you all something. I’ve known Sheriff Block for a long time, long time, and probably before some of you all were born. But I have great respect for him. And after today, as I’ve seen the dimension of this program that helps so many kids, I’ve

got a lot of different feelings now. The respect level is still there, but I didn’t realize the extent of what he started, what, way back in 1972 when the first program started. I think it’s a wonderful thing, and it’s a great example for other communities all across our wonderful country.

I understand that not only do you get training, physical training, keep up an interest in sports, which is fundamental, but that you also are getting the concept from your deputies, from the deputies here and from

your mentors and those who are giving of their time, that it is important to stay away from the drug scene. I was given this pin here, and I just think you all ought to listen carefully to what these deputies and what these supporters of this program tell you. I wish you well.

Somebody just asked me a question over here from the press that travels with us. A lot of these guys come with the President of the United States wherever you go just to report on what's happening. One of them said to me, "Well, what have you learned today?" And I told him, well, I think I've learned a lot about human nature. I've learned a lot about guys that are working hard out there on the law enforcement side, the sheriff's department, then taken their time to help kids, to lift them up and help them.

I don't know how each of you guys feel, but I'll tell you, I have a sense of gratitude in my heart for those who were really helping you in sports or in reading or in staying away from narcotics or whatever it is. I think we all owe them a vote of thanks not just for what's happening in this county but for others like them all across the country. We call it, incidentally, Points of Light, a thousand Points of Light, one person helping another. That's one of the things I've seen today, is this spirit of this wonderful outfit where people are reaching out.

I also got a little feeling over in the boxing arena about the competitive nature of some of you guys, and that's good. Competitive sports is very, very important. The kind of sportsmanship you learn as well as athletic ability, that's good.

I hope you learn a sense of family here, and I think you do from talking to the sheriff and talking to the others. They're talking to you of the importance of parents and family values and doing things the way your parents want them done, and that's good. So I've learned a little more about that dimension.

I've learned about the kindness of people that you work with. I bet once in a while when you get in trouble you may wonder if they're too kind, but I think I sensed here a, really, feeling of loving and caring for you guys. I think that is very important. So I saw that and felt it in my own heart

a lot more than before I walked in here.

I don't know what else to say about what I've learned, except it's made a big impression on me. And it is far better to get this sense of pride that each of you guys feel than it is to be out there drifting around with nobody caring and not really having identified what you want to do, not feeling wanted. The beautiful thing about this place is the minute you walk in, you feel welcome. You feel you're free to do your best, feel free from any pressures that might exist outside the walls of this place.

So, Sheriff Block, to you and everybody in this wonderful institution, I support you. I salute you, and especially to those adults that give their time to lift these kids up and give them a chance. It's a wonderful, wonderful thing.

Now, what I thought I'd do, and we don't have too long because we've got to go off to another meeting, but I thought if anybody—maybe we've got time for maybe two or three questions—because when I go to schools: "What's it like to be President?", all that kind of stuff; "How's Barbara?" Any questions? Let me take four questions. Anybody got one? Right there, first one. What's your name first?

Q. My name is Nancy.

The President. Nancy, shoot.

#### "Murphy Brown" Television Show

Q. What do you think about Murphy Brown? [Laughter]

The President. Good question, good question. Well, you know, I've got to make a confession. I haven't seen it. [Laughter] But here's my position on that: The values that you get here are good, sound values. And you know, I think what the Vice President was talking about was this concept of parents loving these kids and all of that. So I haven't really seen the program, but I do know that in terms of the values that you learn here, what we call family values, whether it's taught by family or whether it's inculcated into you by these people, your teachers and all, that's a good thing.

I don't know whether you feel closer to your parents when you go home or not, but if you do, you will have learned an awful lot from this place. So that's about the way I

would answer it.

How about this guy?

*Los Angeles*

Q. How do you feel about L.A., about being out here?

*The President.* How do I feel out here? Well, tell me your name.

Q. David.

*The President.* David, here's the way I feel about it. I've got mixed emotions about it. I feel a sense of hope. I feel a sense of wonder at the way these guys help you, your coach. Who's your coach here? Do you have a coach, one coach, or who teaches you in here, any one person?

Q. I guess.

*The President.* Well, is it a woman or a man?

Q. A man.

*The President.* See, that guy, he's helping you. I think to myself, now, here's a guy, he could be doing anything he wanted probably outside here, but he's giving of his time to help you. So I have a sense of gratitude about that. I sometimes have a sense of the problems because the sheriff told me of some of the problems that are faced in the neighborhoods here of drugs and crime. So it's a mixed feeling being here.

But I'll tell you one thing. I'm leaving here with a sense of hope that this city is going to make it, and it's because of kids like you. You're learning good values, and you're doing good stuff. That's the kind of mixed feelings I get.

Over on this side.

Q. How do you feel about the L.A. riots?

*The President.* Very good question. The question is, "How do you feel about the L.A. riots?"

Well, you know, you don't feel it as close when you don't live in the neighborhood, but when you see it you feel a sense of, this is bad. This is a terrible thing when somebody will destroy someone else's property, break up somebody else's business, wantonly threaten somebody else's life. You feel that right away. And I automatically feel we've got to support our law enforcement community. They are working for you. In a sense, they're working for me and for everybody across this country, keeping order.

Then you say when you see it, "I wonder

why all this is happening?" Then you get to some causes, some underlying causes, and you say, hey, institutions like this one is trying to help there. They're trying to teach kids, instead of a bad value of going in and doing something bad to somebody else, a good value of caring for the next. So the riots made a lot of people in our country think about both. How do we enforce the law, and then how do we encourage these wonderful volunteer programs like this not just here, not just in L.A., but in other cities across the country?

So it's a mixed feeling, I think, is the way I'd put it.

How about this guy?

*Sports*

Q. What is your favorite sport?

*The President.* Favorite sport?

Q. Yes.

*The President.* Let's see. I'd say baseball. Any of you guys play soccer? Soccer? Anybody play that? Not many, so few. I used to play that in school. I played basketball in school. I played baseball. And I'll tell you something—this may not be interesting to you because I see a lot of Dodgers suits, and I don't see many Angels. But our son has a team called the Texas Rangers. That's my boy George, and I'm very proud of him. He's the boss of that team, and they are in first place. I say that with all respect to the California Angels.

So I like baseball very much. I like to go to the games. I got to know some of the players, like Nolan Ryan—why, you talk about a great athlete.

*Native Americans*

Q. What kind of things are being done about the American Indian?

*The President.* David? Well, I think that we ought to give plenty of help to those people, and I think we are. I think education is terribly important on the reservation. I think we can do better on it, although I think we've got some good educational programs. Such a broad question that it's pretty hard to answer. I think everybody's entitled to their rights, that's how I'd answer it.

What's your name?

*"Weed and Seed" Program*

Q. [Inaudible]

*The President.* About the riot thing? Kind of like I told him. I think you've got to have respect for the law. I don't think, no matter how much some guy's hurting, that he ought to take the law in his own hands and violate somebody else's property, somebody else's right, somebody else's house, somebody else's business.

Then you have to have programs. We've got a program, and it's got a funny name to it. It's called "Weed and Seed." The sheriff knows what I'm talking about. That's a Federal program. It comes out of Washington. But it's going to have ramifications for a lot of communities. The concept is to weed out the criminal elements and then to seed the neighborhoods with hope. This program does exactly that, seed the neighborhoods with hope.

Two more. Okay, you got it. I saw this guy. He must be tired because he showed me how he was working out.

*The Presidency*

Q. Do you think it's fun to be a President when people give you a hard time? [Laughter]

*The President.* That's a good question. In case they didn't hear it, the question is, "Do you think it's fun to be President when people are giving you a hard time?" [Laughter] That's a good question. It's fun to be President. It's a challenge to be President. It's a great big job, and you kind of feel, well, I'm going to try to help people, or I'm going to try to keep the world at peace. And you meet interesting people and all that—the big problems across the country.

But I'll tell you this about the part that you asked about, about when people give you a hard time. You've got to learn something. When you lose something in sports, I learned this lesson from being President, when you lose something in sports, you can't get all upset about it. If somebody criticizes you because you do something that they don't like or something, you just try to do better. You can't let it get you down. So there are easy times, and there are difficult times. It's in your life, and it's in my life as President of the United States.

So I think what I'd say is, I like my job, and I'm working hard in my job. And I'm doing my best in my job. But if you get a little criticism, you get a little grief out there, don't let it get you down. Just do better. Just do better.

Yes, last one, this guy.

*Audience members.* Awwwwww!

*The President.* Well, hey, listen, I said 4, and it's been 40. Go on now.

*Los Angeles*

Q. How do you feel about the troubles in L.A.?

*The President.* About what?

Q. The troubles in L.A.

*The President.* That's a pretty good question, and I got close to answering it. The guy wants to know, what are you going to do about the troubles in L.A.? Well, what we've done to start with is to bring a lot of Federal programs in to help, starting loan programs to help people get their businesses back, starting emergency programs to help people reconstruct their houses where they've been done grief. This "Weed and Seed" program is a good thing.

But the main thing we're trying to do is pass what we call, this is complicated, enterprise zones to bring businesses, through tax breaks, right into the south central L.A. area or other areas where there hasn't been many jobs. That's the answer for guys a little older than you, to create a climate where businesses will come near here, right near here to open up. So that's a big objective we have that would help in the cities.

Hey, you had one. We can't—I really have got to get out. There was one, the guy was a real insistent guy right here. Here it is, because the sheriff says I've got to get out of here. I know he feels that way. This guy here, he's been very patient. Yes, you, the guy up here, Karate Man, and who—another one was here. Right up here. That's the final one. Yes, go ahead.

*President's Life in the White House*

Q. What is your life like?

*The President.* My life, my life like? The same as—this may be difficult for you to understand—pretty much the same as what a lot of people are. We've got 5 kids, and

we've got 12 grandchildren, one of them—how old are you? Nine. I'm not sure we've got a 9-year-old; I think we do. [Laughter]

I get a kick when they come into the White House. Have you seen pictures of the White House? The President has to work there all the time. Sometimes when it's quiet, the door opens up. And my grandchildren, a couple of them will come running in, or a dog will come, one of my dogs, Millie or Ranger, will come in there. And you feel just like I did when I was a kid with the family, you know.

Some of it's personal like that, and then some of it very serious, when world leaders and presidents and kings and mayors and governors come to see you. So it's a mixture. But it's not that different in how we actually live our lives with Barbara and I over there in the White House. We try to stay in touch a little and try to keep our family going, get on the phone and call the kids that live in Texas and Florida and all around the country. Even though it's very formal and very complicated at times, you still have the feeling these are the values.

You know, when things are tough—my mother told me when I was a little guy, younger than you, "Do your best. Try your hardest." That advice is good for a kid, and it's good for a President of the United States.

Now, we've got two more.

#### *Rodney King Verdict*

Q. How do you feel about the Rodney King verdict?

*The President.* The question was, how do I feel about the Rodney King verdict? As I told the Nation, what I saw I didn't like. I am also very confident that our law, our system of law in the final analysis is fair. I'm convinced that justice is done under our system of law. So I didn't like the pictures, but I also feel that everybody's entitled, no

matter what you see, to a fair hearing, a fair trial. So those are—what did you feel? I'm just curious.

*Audience member.* They were wrong to beat him up.

*The President.* Yes, it's wrong to beat up people. I think that's a good point. I said that, you know, when I made a speech to the country on that point. It's a good point.

#### *Presidential Campaign*

Q. How do you feel about running for President again?

*The President.* Good question to end on. [Laughter] You've got to admit, you guys have to admit there have been no politics in this up until now. And she said, "How do you feel about running for President again?" I will only answer it that I've got a lot of work left to do, and I'm going to try to do what I said over here to this guy: Do my best; try my hardest. I think things are getting better for some in this country, but nobody can relax until you try to help everybody.

So in some ways it's tough. You're going a lot. In some ways there's a lot of controversy; like this guy said, what if you're getting grief out there. But it's important, and I believe in this country, and I think our best days are ahead. I look around this room, and I am more confident than ever that the best days of our country lie ahead because you're a great part of our future.

Good luck to each and every one of you. Thanks a lot.

*Note: The President spoke at 5:30 p.m. at the Lynwood Youth Athletic Center. In his remarks, he referred to Sherman Block, Los Angeles County sheriff. Prior to his remarks, the President attended a briefing on league activities and toured the center. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.*